



GROUND COVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP

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GROUNDCOVER NEWS MISSION:

Groundcover News exists to create opportunity and a voice for low-income people while taking action to end homelessness and poverty.

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Susan Beckett
Publisher

Cutting the budget on the backs of the poor

As all levels of government prepare to slash services and reduce income supplements, Groundcover volunteers are working to expand capacity to meet the anticipated rise in people teetering on the edge.

The plan is to expand into other downtown areas and major corridors. Thanks to the enterprising initiative of our vendors, especially Tony, we are now selling in downtown Ypsilanti and several Ypsilanti churches, in addition to our Ann Arbor locations.

Among the expected budget savings measures most likely to hurt local residents is the elimination of the state and federal earned income tax credit (EITC), which

returns several thousand tax dollars to workers whose earnings are below the poverty level. Adding to the pain for low income families, the cuts to Head Start and the slashes to the Child Care Development Block Grant contained in the U.S. House budget will cost over 8,000 Michigan children their preschool experience and impact twice as many in the loss of child care subsidies. Many parents will likely find they spend more in child care than they net in income. What is a single parent to do?

According to the Center for Law and Social Policy, more than 44% of Michigan children lived in low income families in

2009 – that's well over one million children. Half of those children are considered poor. Those numbers will certainly swell as the several hundred Head Start teachers and child care workers join the ranks of the unemployed and income supports disappear.

Few current Groundcover vendors have children at home, and selling newspapers on the street does not lend itself to caring for young children. This is a dilemma we will have to face as a community and address creatively, knowing there is no government aid forthcoming – unless the drastic House cuts are reduced or eliminated by the Senate.

Be Not Afraid part 2

by Rev. Dr. Martha A.
Brunell Pastor, Bethlehem
United Church of Christ

Shortly after I wrote my February column for *Ground-Cover*, I discovered a wonderful quote by Joan Chittister. Joan is a sister in a Benedictine community in Erie, Penn. Her writing, speaking, and clear, courageous stands are treasured in religious and spiritual communities around the globe. Chittister has written: Be not afraid to speak. Be afraid what will happen to the whole truth if you don't. As a result of the comments and the quote, I decided to approach Be Not Afraid from another angle.

As our snowy winter moves forward into March, I recall a profound moment of being

unafraid to speak on March 21, 1965. That day 46 years ago, the four-day civil rights march from Selma to Montgomery, Ala. began. At the head of the march were many truth-tellers walking arm-in-arm. Among them were Martin Luther King Jr. and Rabbi Abraham Heschel. These two men, one a black man whose childhood was spent in Atlanta, Georgia, and the other, a Jewish man whose childhood was spent in Warsaw, Poland, knew what it was like to be denied full civil rights and to be oppressed and threatened at every turn. They also both had parents who were committed to affirming in severely limited and dangerous settings that Martin and Abraham were beloved by God and as good as anyone else. The

differences between Martin and Abraham were obvious. They didn't share race, religion, or origins. Their common truth was equally powerful and was there to be spoken in what they said and did. They were as good as anyone else. Truth was bigger than the familiar fears swirling around their prior experiences. Many took issue with who they were and what they said and did. The truth was theirs to speak individually and together. It expanded beyond all opposition and danger. And so, they were not afraid to speak with their mouths and with their legs. Abraham is quoted as saying to Martin that day "I feel like my legs are praying."

There is many a truth to be told about homelessness here in Washtenaw County. It is truth we can encourage in one another. It underlines the reality we are all as good as one another. Groundcover listens for and amplifies voices that others would prefer to dismiss. There is truth in these monthly pages; it can be scary to both writers and readers. But it is truth that has been given to each of us to utter beyond fear.

P.S. There is a beautiful children's book, *As Good As Anybody*, by Richard Michelson, about the remarkable friendship between Martin Luther King Jr. and Rabbi Abraham Heschel and their collaborative telling of the truth.

Letter to the Editor Vaccines still the best option

Thanks so much for covering the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations. You may take some heat in Ann Arbor for your pro-vaccine stand, but the science behind vaccine safety is better than for any other class of medicine, with over 25 studies, including the largest study ever done on any medicine, showing that vaccines are safe, and no study published showing significant risk from vaccines. Their necessity has been highlighted this year by the local pertussis (whooping cough) epidemic,

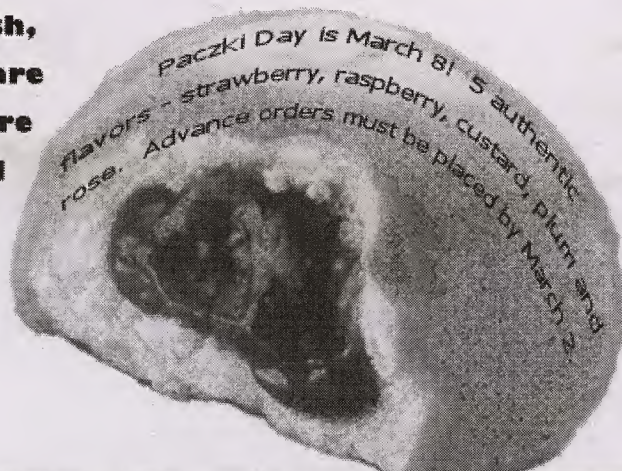
present here in Washtenaw County, but much less severe in neighboring counties with higher overall vaccination rates. As a local pediatrician, it has broken my heart to see so many babies, as well as a couple of grandmothers, suffer needlessly from this preventable disease. Keep up your good work for our community, especially our most vulnerable populations!

Sincerely,
Andrew Seiler
Liberty Pediatrics

Copernicus European Delicatessen

Fresh Polish food, fresh baked bread, smoked fish, deli meats and cheeses are available every day, as are a variety of hot and cold lunch choices. Eat in or carry out.

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Near North housing project raises complex questions

by Christopher Alexander

The struggle to build an affordable housing project called "Near North" underscores an important question for our community: Should society subsidize low income affordable housing developments in an effort to create racial or economic diversity?

Groundbreaking on this low-income housing development, located on North Main Street, is expected to take place early this spring. The roughly \$15 million project is a partnership between Avalon Housing and local land developer, Three Oaks Group.

It takes a complicated assortment of local, state, federal and private investments to finance a project like this, which is why building affordable housing can be challenging even in relatively prosperous communities such as Ann Arbor.

"There hasn't been any affordable housing of any density built in the central downtown for many, many years," Bill Godfrey, a partner at Three Oaks said. "There's a reason for that."

"It's because it's very difficult to find a location that isn't so expensive that it rules out the possibility of building affordable housing. We view this as an achievement. If building affordable housing were easy, we would have solved the housing crisis a long time ago."

Near North will be located on N. Main St., south of Summit Street. Currently the site contains eight condemned houses that will be demolished to make room for the new building.

Avalon Housing is a Washtenaw County nonprofit that has worked in the community to develop and manage affordable housing for almost 20 years. Avalon's director, Michael Appel, has been involved with low income housing during that nearly two decades.

"From our perspective," Appel said, "we were asked to join in a project that could provide affordable housing in a location that Avalon would not be able to develop on its own."

"We have multiple partners, with both public subsidy and private investment. The end result will both benefit the North Main entrance to Ann Arbor, the community and its residents."

Currently, Avalon maintains 23 properties with 324 separate units. Near North will



This party store on North Main Street will be torn down to make room for the Near North subsidized housing project, which will break ground this spring.

add 31 units to their portfolio. Avalon's tenants typically earn less than 30 percent of the area median income. Also, they've normally specialized in what's termed 'supportive housing.' A sizable portion of Near North's units are specifically designated as supportive housing.

"Supportive housing is the combination of non-profit affordable housing operation and the availability of flexible, individualized support services for tenants with special needs," according to their website.

"Across the country, supportive housing is proving to be the single most effective solution to homelessness for individuals and families who, in addition to being homeless, are working to manage mental and physical disabilities."

The Avalon/Three Oaks partnership hit a major hurdle when the neighborhood's local homeowner's group, the North Central Property Owners Association, raised an objection to the scale of the development.

The homeowners association protested that the original plan for a five-story structure with a mix of 61 one- and two-bedroom units, as well as some commercial and office space, violated the character of the neighborhood.

"This is perhaps one of the most diverse neighborhoods in the city," said an association member and adjoining property owner who did not want to be named. "In its more than 50 year history, the group has supported a variety of new housing options and rehab projects and has a strong legacy and belief in welcoming low income

and supportive housing in the neighborhood.

"Avalon currently manages a number of small scale supportive housing units here, and does a great job," the homeowner said. "We were excited to have more low income and supportive housing in our neighborhood. So it was with great regret that in the spring of 2009, we felt we had no option but to oppose the project, due to its massive design."

"We felt the building would destroy the human scale and tree-lined greenbelt entry

into Ann Arbor and replace it with an oversized, institutional structure that would foster isolation from the neighborhood."

Godfrey said that negotiations between the joint venture and the neighborhood went on for about a year.

Near North needed an exemption and special zoning approval, called a Planned Unit Development, to build. The PUD approval allowed the site to be a mixed use develop-

see NEAR NORTH, back page

Groundcover Vendors Code of Conduct

While Groundcover News is a nonprofit organization, and newspaper vendors are considered contracted self-employers, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper.

Every vendor reads and signs the code of conduct before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

All vendors must agree to the following code of conduct:

- Groundcover News will be distributed for a voluntary donation of \$1. I agree not to ask for more than a dollar or solicit donations by any other means.
- I will only sell current issues

of Groundcover News.

- I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper.
- I will wear and display my badge when selling papers.
- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover News Staff and will not sell to or buy papers from other Groundcover News vendors, especially vendors who have been suspended or terminated.
- I agree to treat all customers, staff, and other vendors, respectfully. I will not "hard sell," threaten, harass or pressure customers, staff, or other vendors verbally or physically.
- I will not sell Groundcover News under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- I understand that I am not a legal employee of Ground-

cover News but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.

- I understand that my badge is property of Groundcover News and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers.
- I agree to stay off private property when selling Groundcover News.
- I understand to refrain from selling on public buses, federal property or stores unless there is permission from the owner.
- I agree to stay at least one block away from another vendor. I will also abide by the Vendor corner policy.
- I understand that Groundcover strives to be a paper that covers topics of homelessness and poverty while providing sources of income for the homeless. I will try to help in this effort and spread the word.

If you see any Groundcover News vendors not abiding by the code of conduct, please report the activity to: contact@groundcovernews.com

A voucher that leads to a home

by Carolyn Lusch

For years the federal government responded to the problem of homelessness by creating neighborhoods of concentrated low-income housing commonly known as "projects." One need not look far locally to find remnants of this strategy; the current Woodbridge Estates in Detroit sit on the land that used to hold the Jeffries Housing Project. This notorious site typified the failed housing project: unsafe, in disrepair, and controlled by drug dealers and gangs. Regardless of outside factors for this decay, it added to the specters of urban uprisings throughout the country in the late 1960s and spurred the government to seek a different strategy for confronting urban homelessness. In 1974, the Section 8 program was created under President Nixon, and since then it has become the foundation of the federal government's efforts to confront homelessness.

Project and Tenant Based Vouchers

The Section 8 program involves two kinds of vouchers: tenant-based and project-based. Project-based vouchers are contracts given to organizations such as Avalon Housing, a non-profit that develops and manages supportive rental housing in Washtenaw County. These vouchers stay with specific building projects to ensure that units will be affordable as tenants move in and out. Some units at Avalon's Pear Street Apartments benefit from these vouchers, and the Near North Development, now in planning stage, will have a project-based contract for fourteen of its thirty-nine units.

Tenant-based Section 8 vouchers are administered by the Ann Arbor Housing Commission (AAHC) in Washtenaw, Western Wayne, and Monroe counties. These vouchers assist individuals with any housing they choose that meets program requirements. Applications for the waiting list are accepted every two to four years,

and applicants who are accepted must seek out a landlord willing to take the voucher.

For David, who has had a Section 8 voucher for two years, the wait was a little over six years between the time he applied and the time he was accepted for a voucher. He brushed the time off, however, saying that he's known people who have waited much longer. Eddy is one of these, who waited seventeen years to get on the waitlist. However, once there, he found the process of applying and finding housing relatively easy.

But getting a voucher is by no means easy. Michael Appel, associate director of Avalon Housing, agrees that obtaining a voucher is "absolutely a long process." There are a number of different administering agents, including AAHC and Veteran's Affairs, and the waiting lists are closed most of the time. One local applicant waited seventeen years to get on the waiting list.

Julie Steiner, director of the Washtenaw Housing Alliance, said, "That's not because of the program, it's because of budgets."

She believes that the program itself works very well, but that Washington politics have prevented her organization from receiving adequate funding.

"We haven't gotten a new allocation of vouchers in a very long time. When vouchers do open, it's because somebody who had a voucher lost their voucher entitlement."

Steiner is concerned about changes in funding that may come with the 2012 federal budget. President Obama's proposal would cut \$350 million in funding for Community Development Block Grants, which can be used for shelters and low-income housing. "We know we don't have enough affordable housing," Steiner said. "When they cut the federal budget, it's going to get worse."

HUD-VASH

The Veterans Affairs' Housing and Urban Development-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program provides rental assistance and case management for homeless veterans in the Ann Arbor area. Eligible veterans are identified through homeless outreach social workers, referred by the VA staff, and assisted in the application process. The VA also works closely with the Ann Arbor Housing Commission to train veterans and work with them to find appropriate housing.

The Ann Arbor VA follows the Critical Time Intervention model to help veterans successfully transition into housing. This a three-stage process in which VA workers assist veterans in establishing support networks and advocate on their behalf with landlords and neighbors. The agency also helps these veterans develop daily living skills, such as cleaning, cooking, grocery shopping, decorating, and money management.

Although part of the Section 8 program, HUD-VASH serves some people that the regular Section 8 cannot, including sex offenders and people who owe money to the Federal Housing Administration.

Shawn Dowling is program supervisor for the Ann Arbor HUD-VASH. Dowling acknowledges that the vouchers are "like pennies from heaven" — the number of vouchers they have available is determined entirely by the federal government. However, she believes that ending veteran homelessness is a high priority for the current administration and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

The Section 8 Difference

Steiner believes that the difficulty of Section 8 lies in the funding, not in the program itself. "Particularly for people who've

"Particularly for people who've been homeless, getting a Section 8 voucher is the most effective way to keep people from falling back into homelessness again."

— Julie Steiner, Director of the Washtenaw Housing Alliance

been homeless, getting a Section 8 voucher is the most effective way to keep people from falling back into homelessness again."

The life-changing potential of Section 8 is something Dowling has witnessed on the job. She tells the story of a veteran who lived in Ann Arbor's tent city for three years before the VA helped him to get Section 8 housing. Once in his apartment, the neighbors and landlord worried for him because he spent every night on the balcony. Despite this initial fear of the transition, he is now living comfortably in his new abode and is proud of his success. "That's the miracle of these vouchers," says Dowling.

Both Eddy and David found greater freedom after transitioning from public housing to section 8 housing. Once in the section 8 program, David was able to choose to live in a senior citizens' apartment, which is an environment in which he feels more comfortable. Eddy experienced deteriorating comfort and safety in public housing, before he was able to move to section 8 housing. When the other tenants in that apartment building became too loud, he realized he could move to a place that suited him better. "I have section 8 now. I have choices." Eddy now has a good home with a nice backyard, trees, and access to different parts of town, and looks back on his transition as a tale of survival.

Vendor Rissa believes faith can conquer despair

As Susan Beckett has penned, I am an incurable optimist whose philosophy of life takes a positive outlook at everything. As I opine, I am challenged at every point on the spectrum of life to make lemonade out of the lemons. Although we cannot control what happens to us, we can control how we respond to what happens to us. Perspectives are reality for the individual. If you see the events of life as an obstacle or an opportunity, you're right either way

How about despair? That is a perspective.

However, it is a perspective that can be overridden by the "higher power." In my perspective, the person who is in despair still has hope. Consider this writing:

DESPAIR by Robert Hoepner

Her boyfriend broke up with her. Her Mom caught her shoplifting. Life was not worth living as far as she was concerned. To the top of the fire escape she climbed. She jumped, but her suicide attempt failed. She lives with a broken body.

Despair overwhelms. Disappointment and shame extinguishes hope. Alcohol and drugs cannot remove the problem, they only magnify it. What about running away? We cannot escape from our problems. Despair takes on many forms of self-destruction.

Is there help? Kind people are hard to find who support the wounded. Few are so fortunate as to have merciful friends. But there is a Friend. He is near, merciful, and able to help. We would be fools if we did not call on Him. This Friend is Jesus Christ, God's one

and only Son. He knows humiliation! He carried our sins to the cross so that we don't have to suffer despair. Christ is our hope, our life, and our salvation.

Despair happens, but with Jesus we can handle it. The girl who tried to commit suicide knows Jesus now and therefore has hope. I pray that you do too.

I have experienced many reasons not to believe, but by holding onto hope, I have not been disappointed. Do you suppose
see Rissa, page 6

Student learns about life through homeless interview

Savannah Arindaeng was assigned to interview someone of local or personal significance for her American History class. She chose to tell the story of one of Ann Arbor's homeless people. Says Savannah, "Meeting with Gwidian Storm provided me with a window into a world I want to know more about. It occurred to me that many people are only a few life choices away from finding themselves in a similar circumstance."

— Peter Scherer, history teacher,
Rudolph Steiner High School

by Savannah Arindaeng

After approaching this man and saying hello, I asked if I could talk to him for a moment. He said, "Of course." I then asked if I could sit down with him; he welcomed a discussion. I explained my assignment, showed him the letter from my teacher, and offered to take him to lunch. He said he had already eaten, but any money would be very much appreciated.

Q: What is your name?

A: My name is Gwidian Storm. Uh, I got it at a Vision Quest actually, and it is my real name now because that's the name I use all the time.

Q: How long have you lived in Ann Arbor?

A: Um, I got here, uh, like two days before art fair started. I've been traveling, hitchhiking, homeless, on the road, for over twenty-one years. I've been from one ocean to the other and back five times. I'm likin' Ann Arbor a lot! I'm happy to be here...

Q: Do you want to talk about how you got in this situation?

A: Well, uh, I...I started out twenty-one years ago just basically wantin' to be an old school hippie, you know, and I met some people and started traveling, and you know by the time I was turnin' thirty...I couldn't get out of it anymore. I started tryin' to settle down and get a job...but, you know, I've got mental problems which I'm workin'...workin' with court right now. Uh my psychiatrist says I have chronic depression and uh, uh... a personality disorder, and basically what that means is that I've been fired from every job I've ever had. So at this point nobody really wants to hire me. So, uh...you know there's not a whole lot out there for un-skilled labor, which is what I am... So here I am.

Q: What kinds of jobs have you had previously?

A: I've had every kind of shit job you can possibly imagine, from pumpin' gas to workin' in a nuclear power plant.

Q: You seem to have had a really hard, but interesting life. What's the happiest moment of your life that you can remember?

A: Hmm... I'd have to say that would be when I fell in love. But, that would be also followed the unhappiest moment of my life...when she didn't.

Q: When was that?

A: Back in 2006. And, that's really about all I really wanna say about that.

Q: Did you go to college?

A: I did a couple semesters of college. Flunked out because for the first time in my life I had a social life, which I didn't in high school, and I got distracted, and flunked out...

Q: Where were you born?

A: Columbus, Ohio.

Q: When you were a kid, was school ever an issue for you or was it just a normal experience?

A: Well, basically...the schoolwork wasn't the problem. I was actually bored with the academic work. The problem was socializing. I was raised as an only child and I just don't really get along with other people that well.

Q: When you were a child, what did you think you were going to be doing at this point in your life?

A: Oh I don't know. I figured I'd be an astronaut, or somethin' stupid.

Q: What kind of relationship did you have with your parents?

A: I was actually raised by my...by a foster mother. Uh, the woman who birthed me was kind of abusive and so was her boyfriend. My natural father was an alcoholic and couldn't take care of me, so he asked a friend of his to raise me...and she did. And, you know, it was a typical relationship with parents, except my primary parental figure was old enough to be my grandparent. So, other than that, it was fairly normal.

Q: Are you still in contact with her at all?

A: Oh no. She's dead!

Q: What are you're most proud of in your life?

A: Hmmm. (Pause) that's a tough question. Guess I'd have to say the mileage...that's about it.

Q: What's the most amazing place you've seen?

A: Oh Grand Mesa, Colorado! Uh, there was one night that I was there - there was a

lunar eclipse, there was a double rainbow around the moon, and I had a sheet and a half of acid in me so...[laughs] It was pretty amazing so...

Q: Everyone has regrets. Do you have any regrets that really stand out, or moments that you really wish you could just take back?

A: Oh too many things to list - too many things to list and I'd rather not talk about them.

Q: What is one of the most important lessons you've learned?

A: That it's all about perspective. Never think you know everything cuz' when you shift to somebody else's point of view...it's all different.

Q: Have you ever wanted to have a family or kids of your own?

A: I've thought about it a lot, but, uhh really, I'm not cut out to be a dad. I, I'd rather not raise children. They might end up as screwed up as I am.

Q: What kind of social circle were you part of as a kid?

A: Well mostly, I was hangin' by myself. I didn't really have too many friends when I was a kid.

Q: When were you born?

A: 1968.

Q: What do you think your future holds? Do you see yourself just traveling for the rest of your life?

A: Well uh, hopefully I see myself getting a disability check, and a Section 8 health somewhere here in Ann Arbor. And, I'd like to settle down here, and you know, just try to learn how to be a regular consumer.

Q: When in your life have you felt the most alone?

A: Hmm. I'm never alone really. I mean, even...even though I'm alone, I'm not. You know, God is always with me. So, I've never been completely alone.

Q: Who has been the kindest to you in your life?

A: Um...the people who give me money. I mean, you know...there are kind people everywhere, but I mean...kindest? Who is to say? You know?

Q: Who had the biggest influence on your life?

A: Probably my second mom. She was uh, the leader of a lesbian, pagan, folk band



that, uh, I hooked up with. I was already off and on for like 10 years, and she taught me a lot, about growin' up, and having responsibility, and that sort of thing.

Q: Where do you go at night?

A: I have a tent down by the river.

Q: And when it's really cold in the winter? And when it's snowing?

A: I'll still be in the tent by the river.

Q: When you're in one spot, like you are now in Ann Arbor, what do you usually do during the day?

A: Well, uh, I spend part of the time beggin', I spend part of the time hangin' out with other street people, and you know, when we got some beer, or some whiskey or some weed, then we'll sneak off and do that! Yeah, mostly it's pretty boring. It's all about, you know, either makin' money, or spendin' money, tryin' to have a good time.

Q: Have you ever felt like you just didn't want to go on anymore?

A: Well yeah, yeah. I mean, like I said, I do have chronic depression, and the only thing that keeps me from being suicidal is, I know that I'm not allowed to die without permission. God said so...I believe her.

Q: How do you want to be remembered?

A: I'll be happy if I just got a grave with a tree on it. A successful life in my opinion is an obscure life. Nobody says anything bad about dead people they never heard of.

Q: Are there any other words of advice, or wisdom?

A: Hmm...words of advice or wisdom? Don't spit into the wind.

Q: [Laughs] I'll definitely remember that...

Music, art and a corrections career for vendor Eddy

by Susan Beckett
Publisher

The mellow strains of his guitar have serenaded passers-by at Liberty and Fourth Avenue for years, but now Eddy is more often seen with his stack of Groundcover papers. His winning smile and easy-going disposition charm all those who stop and listen. His lithe figure belies his middle age years but reflects his pastimes of running and exercise.

Born and raised in Ann Arbor, Eddy attended Slauson Middle School and graduated from Pioneer High School in 1989. He fondly recalls singing in the choir and taking guitar class under the direction of Mr. Westerman, and also taking some piano classes. He was also assigned a life coach at Pioneer to help him organize and manage his finances.

Upon graduation, Eddy's life coach helped him get section 8 housing at a low-income complex but he found it a terrifying place to live. During the 17 years he lived there

he witnessed three stabbings, one of which would have been fatal had Eddy not called 911. Drug dealers and rapists were among his neighbors and Eddy was anxious to find a better place to live. Finally, he received a section 8 voucher, then spoke to the landlord of a nice, safe complex and convinced him to accept the voucher.

Eddy works steadily, always for at least five years in each job, often working two jobs at a time. He currently does janitorial work part-time for the county and works security at a downtown club. He attended Washtenaw Community College (WCC) on a loan arranged through the college. He pursued criminal studies and completed quite a few courses but failed one class. That resulted in a \$700 bill from WCC with interest accumulating. Though Eddy is eligible for another loan, he says he will never take out another.

His security work piqued his interest in corrections and he would like to return to WCC and get his associates degree in that, for which he needs about 40 credits.

Though he hopes for a Pell grant, he is working and saving as much as he can so he can hopefully afford the tuition on his own someday.

During his time at WCC, Eddy played jazz guitar in the Jazz Band with Johnny Lawrence. Since then he has recorded 2 CDs and may form a band this summer. His work can be previewed on the web by going to the site "cd-baby.com" and searching for "Edward Pow." He also excelled in a class on Art Theory. He puts his drawing talent to use doing caricatures in the summer.

This hardworking and congenial man has



Vendor Eddy, a talented musician who aspires to a career in corrections

been a great addition to the Groundcover family and he is so grateful to his loyal customers!

Rissa has experienced reasons not to believe, but she holds on anyway

continued from page 4

the girl who thought she wanted to end her life is now disappointed that her suicide plans failed? I think not, because she now has opportunity to live life to the fullest and really appreciate the joys of a good relationship. She can now see that a better relationship was waiting for her. If her boyfriend had not broken up with her, she would not have been available to receive and appreciate the good friendship in a better and more nurturing and healthy relationship environment. Had she not felt the agony of shame of getting caught shoplifting, she would not have been able to enjoy the beauty of mercy, grace, and forgiveness. It is the benefit of grace, mercy, and forgiveness that teaches us to correct our mistakes and make better choices for better and greater consequences.

Hope can change perspectives to create more positive outlooks. This is the dy-

namic that occurs when you believe you can: ideas on how to accomplish "it" flourish. Conversely, if you think you cannot, reasons why you should fail bombard your brain. Hope does make a difference.

I am challenged everyday to think on whatever is true, right, and of Good Repute – to see the silver lining in every cloud. How about you? Do you have some clouds that need to have the silver lining revealed?

Take on the Challenge!

Let's see if a silver lining can be found in your cloud.

Write Rissa at:
submissions@groundcovernews.com.



Bethlehem United Church of Christ
423 S. Fourth Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48104
(between William and Packard)

www.bethlehem-ucc.org (734) 665-6149

Bethlehem Church is the home of the Groundcover office.

Sundays:

8:30 am ~ Choir Rehearsal
8:30 am and 10:00 am ~ Worship
9:00 am ~ Confirmation Class
10:00 am ~ Church School
10:00 am ~ Young Adult Forum
11:30 am ~ Youth Fellowship

Upcoming Events:

March 9 ~ Ash Wednesday Worship and Study ~ 7:30 pm
March 13/11:30 am or March 14/11:00 am ~ Book Study
Wednesday Night Study Sessions on Spiritual Practice:
March 16, 23, 30, April 6, and 13 at 7:30 pm
March 19 ~ Gospelfest ~ 7:00 pm
March 20 ~ Fresh produce collection for Food Gatherers
March 22 ~ Applebee's Fundraiser ~ all day
March 21 to 27 ~ Men's Rotation Shelter
an invitation to grow in spirit and serve with joy

From around the world to *By the Pound*

by Susan Beckett

Behind the placid friendly face of Glenn Bourland, owner of By The Pound, is a man whose wildly shifting life belies the stability evident in his bulk foods store. Perhaps his adventures attuned him to listening closely. It's tricky in a place like By the Pound where there is only one register and customers are accustomed to breezing through. Still, Glenn tries hard to listen to customers, especially about what he should stock.

"I have almost 200 spices now and people love the spices. They're fresh and they're inexpensive," Bourland crows. His selection of teas is also very popular and he sells a lot of bulk coffee, including Ann Arbor's Roos Roast. Customers claim the red popcorn from Ann Arbor's Bur Oaks Farm is the best they have ever tasted. It is the terrific selection of bulk Callebaut chocolate that often draws this writer to the store.

Whenever possible, Bourland buys local. He credits the popularity of the nuts he sells to their exquisite freshness, roasted weekly by Rocky Peanut of Detroit. Customers frequently tell him that By the Pound is their favorite store because of the quality and the opportunity to buy exactly how much they want. It is one of the few places in town where the ingredients for a nourishing meal for one can be purchased for a dollar.

The economic downturn has actually spurred business. "Liquor, fast food and By the Pound do better in a bad economy," quips Bourland. He's learned that people are doing more cooking and baking for themselves and for others as gifts, and they come to him purchase their basic ingredients in bulk.

But how did a boy who grew up in the Santa Cruz area and attended the University of Hawaii on a golf scholarship come to be the proprietor of such a store in Ann Arbor, Michigan? It's the tale of a man finding himself again and again, and it began when he dropped out of college after three years because he didn't know where he was going.

He returned to California where he worked as a phone clerk on the Pacific Stock Exchange and soon yearned to be a trader. He bartered golf lessons for training and financial backing as an options trader-broker. Six months later he was on the floor trading. Three lucrative years he



Glenn Bourland, owner of By the Pound, in front of his extensive spice racks

was ready for another change and set off to bicycle around the world.

He and his friend Glen (with one 'n') set out for the East coast. As they passed through Death Valley, they found a Japanese tourist stretched out at the side of the road, overcome with thirst. He had set out with insufficient water, unaware of the extreme heat and aridity. They rehydrated him and escorted him to a town, then continued on their dusty way.

Near dusk they stumbled on what appeared to be a ranger's house in the vicinity of the campground they had ridden five, uphill and very hot miles looking for. Lured by a hose with water, they started cleaning themselves off, but within minutes they were naked and dancing like children in a sprinkler. They gratefully set up camp on the scrubby lawn and fell into a deep sleep from which they were violently aroused at midnight by an indignant assistant park ranger, incensed that they were camping on the head ranger's lawn. He threw their things in his truck and relocated them to the gravel parking lot that passed for a campground in that area. Once he left, the Glens burst out laughing, thinking, "What he would have done if he had seen them a few hours earlier!"

Later in the trip, a violent lightning storm engulfed them while they tried to reach a small New Mexico mesa town. Riding feverishly against the driving rain, the Glens watched a cactus explode from a lightning hit a mere 100 yards away. After ten minutes of hell, they rode into an old abandoned mining town. There was only one public space and that was a tough looking cowboy bar. In they sauntered, clad in wet, form fitting biker shorts. With all eyes upon on them, they retreated to the men's room to dry off and change into dry clothes and were soon barked at, "Hey, cut it short in there!"

After quietly finding a few places at the end of the bar, the other Glen went to call his San Francisco girlfriend, on the pay phone. Slowly the conversation in the bar died and everyone could hear Glen moaning, "Oh Rosie, I love you, Rosie. You know I miss you Rosie," and so on. When Glen hung up, the room went completely silent. Then the bar filled with a cacophony of "Oh Rosie, I love you, Rosie. I miss you, Rosie!" The Glens hustled out and found an abandoned house with broken window glass on the floor that proved a more comfortable place for them to crash and wait out the storm.

By the time they reached the East Coast, Glen missed Rosie too much to continue. Glenn biked solo along the east coast but found that, although he loved seeing the country by bicycle and talking with people along the way, it lost its luster without a companion with whom to share such observations. He shipped his bike home and took off backpacking through Europe and Asia.

In Europe Glenn visited Spain, France, Germany, Austria, Holland, England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, meeting and travelling with people from numerous nations. His fondest memories are the times he spent with the Australians and New Zealanders at the Oktoberfest in Germany. "Those guys and girls really knew how to have fun."

A tall, pale man, Glenn really stood out in China, especially while he was accompanied by a former girlfriend, a 5'10" Jr. Olympic swimmer and swimsuit model. This was 1985, and China had only been open to tourists for a few years. They were okay as long as they didn't stop. Once, Glenn paused to watch a street musician playing and within a minute there were 50 to 100 people watching Glenn watch the flute player.

Chinese customer service was eye-opening. The counters were four deep with people waiting to be served and if you didn't push forward, you never got a turn. He went once to a 15 story hotel, with 30 rooms to a floor, and asked for a room. The clerk told him it was full. As he headed out through the lobby, an Aussie called to him, "You just have to wait him out. This place is nearly empty. I'm the only one on my floor." Glenn returned to the desk every 15 minutes and was told, "All full," until an hour and a half later when the clerk remarked, "A room opened up." Glenn was the only occupant on that floor.

He reflected that at that time, all Chinese took at test at age 17 that determined their futures. They were told what job they would have for life based on those test results. Some women were assigned the job of sweeping the freeways, a terrifying prospect in a city like Beijing where there were 30,000 car accidents each year. Glenn surmised that the clerk had not wanted the job he was assigned and was desperate to assert his personal power.

see WORLD-WIDE, p. 10

Sudoku ★★★★★ 4puz.com

	7	2	5					1
1	8		4					
				1	2			3
7								9 6
				9				
4	5							8
9			3	2				
					6		2	9
	2				5	7	8	

Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.

ACROSS

1. Skiff
5. Balls
9. NFL coach
14. Curved wall or ceiling
15. Samoan musician Opetaita
16. Inn
17. Irish county and crystal manufacturer
19. Large auditorium
20. Alpaca's relative
21. Visions
23. Ponder
25. Audio component, for short
29. Cause a slow absorption
33. Dorothy Gale's dog
35. Bad (prefix)
36. Incirlik Air Base (airport code)
37. Tub
39. Dinnerware
41. Irish county, noted for its music
43. Irish novelist Adrian
45. Farewell
46. Med. students group (abbr.)
48. Soccer star
49. Computer programming language
50. Thought
52. Quarterback, usually
54. Actress Durbin
56. Chinese surname
58. Blue
60. Fiddler on the Roof star
65. Sovereign
68. Irish county, subject of a World War I song
70. Egyptian crosses
71. Snow vehicle
72. Prevaricator
73. Editor's marks
74. Actor Robert or Alan
75. Fashion magazine

DOWN

1. Cry
2. Semiprecious stone
3. Nick and Nora Charles's dog
4. Swarm
5. Power switch position
6. Area measurements
7. Irish boxer Coleman
8. Surface of a building
9. Symbol associated with St. Patrick's Day

Ireland

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13
14					15					16				
17					18					19				
20						21			22					
					23	24			25			26	27	28
29	30	31	32				33	34				35		
36					37	38				39	40			
41				42				43	44					
45						46	47					48		
49					50	51				52	53			
54			55				56	57						
				58			59			60	61	62	63	64
65	66	67				68			69					
70						71					72			
73						74					75			

10. Palomino
11. American Indian tribe
12. Masculine nickname
13. _____ mode
18. Sheep
22. Suitable
24. Japanese surname
26. Organic compounds
27. Famous Yankee
28. Game participant
29. "_____ in the Way," 1970s album title
30. Something boring and ponderous
31. Philippine city
32. Decorative molding
34. _____ Law: $V = IR$
38. Wings
40. Pelvic joints
42. Irish brewer Arthur

44. Cloak
47. Irish poet Patrick
51. Father
53. Poker bet
55. Dark time
57. Wished
59. _____ *Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*
61. Decorative border
62. Bucket
63. Verbal
64. Stringed instrument
65. _____ Vegas
66. Whole number (abbr.)
67. _____ out, obtain with difficulty
69. Pocket-sized computer (abbr.)

Puzzle by Jeff Richmond

solutions on page 11

Cryptoquotes

Figure out the encryption code to solve the puzzle

"VYQB YM VYUB F DYFIE. CTFO PEG

WBO EGO EQ YO XBDBIXM EI TEC PEG

DVFP YO."

— OEL VBTABA

Thank you...

Our heartfelt thanks to
our most recent donors:
VMT for the gift of a computer
Veronica Sanitate and Rissa Haynes for
donating printers
Catherine Martin Buck for a filing cabinet
Lori Sipes for donating office supplies
Bethlehem Church for office space and the
ongoing support of their staff and
congregants, including a
thoughtful
donation from
Alethea Helbig

We Won't Keep Silent

*Who made your bread? Who swept the floor?
The ghosts of poverty, deemed unseeable,
gathering hopes by moonlight
and spending them in the afternoon glare.*

*Some poor keep their faces shut and bolted.
Some see with eyes sharp as lasers.
Howling gets others locked up,
trading haze and numb for fried food and dry shoes.*

*We won't keep silent.
They want to name us,
cover us over with charity.
Blush of shame, its slow shadow falling ear to eye,
yet our faces won't look away.
We won't honor polite omission.
This world seeks consequence.
We gave back the hair shirt
they wanted us to wear,
took off their thorns and ashes.*

*We are not separate,
illusion though it might be.
King Jr. said, humankind is a garment of mutuality,
a continuous thread woven through
with the intricate braid of sorrow, of joy.
We are knitted each to each.*

*We are garment and nakedness,
need and presence, the face of your kin. Your kin.
The poor are not loose change in society's pocket.*

Karen L. Totten
December 2010

Writer's Workshop is open to all

Writing for publication demands skills and craft. It also calls for a good eye to see stories in your community and visualize their context.

On Saturday, March 26, Groundcover will host a writer's workshop to help contributors and anyone in the community with these skills.

The workshop will be led by Vickie Elmer, a freelance writer whose articles appear in the Washington Post and Fortune and a former editor at Newsday and the Detroit Free Press. Ann Arbor Observer Editor John Hilton and Groundcover Editor Laurie Lounsbury and others will assist.

Participants will learn how to seek out great stories, how to

sharpen their focus and how to develop features and news stories with clarity, color and fairness. The workshop runs 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the First Baptist Church (517 E. Washington St.) in Ann Arbor. An optional lunch afterward will allow the writers to continue their discussions.

Cost of the workshop is \$20, with all funds going to support Groundcover. Writers who have contributed two or more articles to Groundcover or who promise two future articles will be admitted for free.

Pre-registration is required by emailing:
contact@groundcovernews.com
or calling:
734-972-0926

*Writer's Workshop
9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Saturday, March 26
First Baptist Church, Ann Arbor
517 E. Washington Street*

JANUARY IS NOT LONG ENOUGH

*It is hard to do the work of leaving,
so we turn up the music.
We play Barioni, "Nessun Dorma,"
and Bjorling and Nicolai Gedda,
everything loud.*

*Earlier we went room to room,
Picking through our belongings, sorting.
I found a container of toy cars you loved as a boy,
a black Ferrari and a black Murcielago.*

*You race them around the bedroom carpet, seven again, not 18,
open all the doors to show how they work, lift the hood, pretend the radio plays.*

*I found a wooden rattle and little purple felt mouse you stitched in school.
Georges Thill hits a high C and the note hangs in the air
touching every nerve in my shaking body.*

Tenor voices
elevate our sorrow and we retreat to chairs.

Tired.

*We talk about language. The safety of words about words.
If I couldn't sing, I might break my own heart.*

*A friend said once, a person can live anywhere for a short time.
We are living in the air where Georges Thill's voice soars,
over all this, over and through.*

*What will the new people hear after they claim the house?
Music leaking out of the walls in the shadows of early morning.
Arias in the shower, a soft murmur from the basement vents.
Jusse singing "O Helga Natt," or the sound of ten years
compressed into one last climbing scale.*

When we shut the door, it will be music I hear,

Bizet, the last lines of La Boheme,

not a small voice saying "goodbye."

Karen L. Totten
January 2011

A haunting, now infamous, Nazi image has connection to Ann Arbor family

By Martin Stolzenberg

Sometimes we don't know when we are being part of a miracle, the wonder of humanity.

When our son Dan was three years old he had a hospital visit. The diagnosis had been that he had to have his tonsils and adenoids removed. He went into Nyack General Hospital in Nyack, New York a day early, to be prepped for the procedure. It was a sweltering summer day; but there was Danny, uncomfortable and frightened, in a hot hospital gown, with no air conditioning in an otherwise empty ward.

Along came the pediatric surgeon who would be operating the next day. He sized up the situation, telling the attending nurse, "Get this boy out of the gown. Give him his own underpants. He doesn't need a top. Let's get some fans in here to cool the place off. Give him some fluids."

Nice man, we thought. Danny was now more comfortable and less upset. The operation went smoothly. Danny went home in another day or two.

Fast forward 20 years. My wife Gale was teaching in an afternoon religious school program. She was looking in a catalog for some videos for her students to watch. There she found a documentary about a young boy who had become famous for being in a photo from World War II. It is the one of a crowd of Jews in the Warsaw ghetto being menaced by a German soldier with a submachine gun. A little frightened boy is near the soldier. He stands out from the rest of the crowd, because he is holding his arms up, the universal sign of surrender.



The young boy held at gunpoint by Nazis in this infamous photo grew up to show kindness to Ann Arbor family

It was assumed the unknown boy had died in the Holocaust. Then, years later, a man came forward. He had seen the photo, instantly remembering he was that boy. It was verified. He had somehow escaped the carnage, been sent to Israel, grew up there, and became a pediatric surgeon. He immigrated to the U.S., practicing at Nyack General Hospital. His name is Dr. Tzvi Nussbaum. The name of

the film about his life is: Tzvi Nussbaum: A Boy from Warsaw.

Of course, this is the same person who had been so kind to Danny many years later. His life had come a full circle. The boy frightened boy had grown up, choosing to become a doctor, devoted to helping other frightened children, and healing them.

A world-wide bike and hike trail led to Ann Arbor

continued from page 7

Similarly, on a bus trip to the Great Wall, Glenn disembarked with the other passengers when ordered to do so by the driver. When he returned, all the other passengers were already seated and ready to go. As he reached for the door to ascend the steps, the bus drivers shouted at him and raced forward 50 feet. He walked to the bus and the scenario was repeated several times before the driver allowed him back on the bus.

Finally, his brother flew to New Zealand with both their bikes and he finished his journey back in the saddle riding the entire island north to south. Upon returning to California, he developed golf and calendar products for a while. Then he set his sights on the health field, specifically homeopathy, but needed a base training like chiropractic. He opted to train at the Five Branches Institute and graduated with a degree in acupuncture. During that time he also met and married his wife who

hailed from Michigan.

He practiced acupuncture for three years in California in the early 90's. Some of his patients were dying of AIDS. "It is hard mentally working with sick people, especially in alternative medicine with people who have exhausted all other possibilities and are terribly sick," Glenn remarks. His wife was visiting family in Ann Arbor with their young son and a job opportunity presented itself for her here.

They relocated and Glenn considered practicing acupuncture here. He was dissuaded from doing so by another acupuncturist who had recently been prosecuted for practicing in Michigan where it was illegal for anyone but MDs to practice acupuncture (The practitioner escaped conviction by claiming that acupuncture did nothing, so he was not actually practicing medicine!)

Glenn did some construction work then commuted to Chicago four days a week to

work as a trader on the options floor of the Chicago Board of Exchange. The grueling commute and absence from his growing family did not suit him. His wife spotted an ad in the newspaper that By The Pound was for sale and, despite a total lack of experience in retail, they bought it July 1, 1995.

Glenn found running a store to be hard work, especially at first. Luckily, he found Michael, a likeable British tea enthusiast and talented amateur cook with a great memory. He has been a very valuable and trusted employee for many years. A couple of friendly, dependable part-time employees also help at the store, and between the four of them they're able to staff the extensive hours of Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Saturday 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and Sunday, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

"I enjoy talking with my customers. They're really interesting, and I think they like the fact that the owner of the store is



By the Pound owner stands in front of his shop located on South Main Street, next to Back Alley Gourmet

thy guy behind the counter. They also like buying local, staying green, and saving on packaging," Glenn muses. What he's doing must work, since each of his 16 years has been better than the previous one. He's been approached about expanding and opening stores in other locations but after all his peregrinations, Glenn is satisfied exactly how things are. How green is that, recognizing and choosing sufficiency!

Write after Breakfast at St. Andrew's

by David KE Dodge

Dining! Music! Literature!

If you frequent The Breakfast at St. Andrew's Church in Ann Arbor, you are probably aware that the nourishing breakfast is occasionally accompanied by first-class live piano music performed by fellow diners. But there's another opportunity offered by the church to participate in creativity: a weekly gathering of breakfast patrons with professionals from U of M, to engage in writing, reading the writing, and offering comments.

The gathering, called "Write After Breakfast at St. Andrew's," also referred to as "the (writers) workshop," was briefly described in the Agency Spotlight segment in the September issue of Groundcover News. Like the breakfast, the writer's workshop is open to everyone in the community.

The workshop meets on Tuesdays during the U of M Fall and Winter terms, in one of various rooms at St Andrews. After the breakfast is over, at 8:30, the leaders of the group gather with the other interested participants and proceed to the assigned room, and are given a topical word or reading by the leaders. They then write for perhaps 15 minutes to half an hour on the prompt given or on a subject of their own choosing. The participants read their creations and receive and give comments on



what was read. The sessions are usually finished by 10:00 a.m..

Write After Breakfast at St. Andrew's was modeled after the Holy Apostles Soup Kitchen Writer's Workshop, in New York City, which first convened around 1995. Having learned of that workshop, the Rev. Deacon Svea Gray at St. Andrew's spoke to Christine Modey at The Sweetland Center for Writing at UM about starting such a program at St. Andrew's, with leadership of the meetings being provided by The Center. Two professional writers, Charlotte Boulay and Patrick O'Keeffe, rose to the occasion. Thus began, in 2005, meetings

of the workshop at St. Andrew's. The workshop has continued since then meet under the leadership of different professionals from U of M.

You say, "I can't write." This much is for sure - you won't write if you don't try. Give yourself a chance, in an atmosphere of friendly feedback. The next time you find yourself at The Breakfast at St. Andrew's on a Tuesday, wait around until 8:30, and join the current leaders from UM, Courtney and George, along with we fellow writers, and go with us to the workshop. Paper and pens are provided; just bring your creativity. Breakfast is optional.

Puzzle solutions

from page 8

Cryptoquotes

Solution: "Life is like a piano. What you get out of it depends on how you play it."

— Tom Lehrer

3	7	2	5	8	9	6	1	4
1	8	6	4	3	7	9	5	2
5	9	4	6	1	2	8	7	3
7	3	8	2	5	4	1	9	6
2	6	1	8	9	3	5	4	7
4	5	9	7	6	1	2	3	8
9	1	7	3	2	8	4	6	5
8	4	5	1	7	6	3	2	9
6	2	3	9	4	5	7	8	1

B	O	A	T		O	R	B	S		S	H	U	L	A	
A	P	S	E		F	O	A	I		H	O	T	E	L	
W	A	T	E	R	F	O	R	D		A	R	E	N	A	
L	L	A	M	A		D	R	E	A	M	S				
				M	U	S	E		P	R	E	A	M	P	
O	S	M	O	S	E		T	O	T	O		M	A	L	
L	T	A	G		B	A	T	H		C	H	I	N	A	
D	O	N	E	G	A	L		M	C	K	I	N	T	Y	
A	D	I	E	U		A	M	S	A		P	E	L	E	
N	G	L		I	D	E	A		P	A	S	S	E	R	
D	E	A	N	N	A		C	H	E	N					
				I	N	D	I	G	O		T	O	P	O	L
L	I	E	G	E		T	I	P	P	E	R	A	R	Y	
A	N	K	H	S		S	L	E	D		L	I	A	R	
S	T	E	T	S		A	L	D	A		E	L	L	E	

Scrabble – easy as ABC

Arbor Brewing Company, also affectionately known as ABC, welcomes all comers to Wednesday night Scrabble games, played from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m., or as long as any two players choose to keep at it. Just proves there's never a day that's too good for words.



Near North development will earn a Gold LEED rating

continued from page 3

ment. Alongside the residential units, Near North will include around 1,500 square feet of office, and 2,700 square feet of commercial space.

Near North initially violated the existing zoning laws with regard to building's height, density, as well as setback requirements, so exemptions were a necessity.

"We would have liked to build more," Godfrey said, "but there were some compromises that had to be struck with the neighbors.

"If we could have built 48 units, our per-unit costs would have been lower. It would have been more efficient, we would have served more low income households."

To qualify for the PUD exemption and re-zoning, the developers needed to demonstrate that the project offered "significant public benefit." In the case of Near North it was agreed that providing affordable housing in the area met this criteria. After a compromise was reached in September 2009, Ann Arbor City Council unanimously approved the zoning change and cleared the way for Avalon to move forward on the project.

The units at Near North will be reserved for individuals earning between 30 to 50 percent below the area median income. In Ann Arbor this translates into persons

earning less than \$29,000 annually. The 14 units set aside as supportive housing are for individuals earning less than \$17,500. The remaining 25 apartments will rent at the near market rate of \$774 monthly.

In January of last year, the Downtown Development Authority agreed to provide \$500,000 in funding with the stipulation that Near North be built to high standards of environmental design.

The funders at DDA said that they would inject \$400,000 into the project if it attained a minimum Silver LEED rating and an additional \$100,000 if it achieved a Gold LEED rating. LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design; it's a third party verification and construction standard, outlined by the U.S. Green Building Council, that rates how well buildings adhere to "green-building" principles.

LEED looks at several indicators to measure the health of a building project, but the four most important are: Energy efficiency; materials and resources; water efficiency; and sustainable site development.

"There's additional cost for building using LEED," Godfrey said, "however there was a lot of support for doing it. The funders really supported making the project as green and sustainable as possible. It was more than just encouragement; I think they basically said, 'If you're going to do

this, we want you to use our money to achieve LEED status."

Typically the increased costs of building using LEED are offset by savings of energy conserved over the life of a structure. Building with LEED is generally viewed as a sign that developers are investing in the community, as opposed to building quickly and selling off a property. There are also tax incentives to encourage using LEED. Avalon and Three Oaks said that they expect the Near North buildings to meet DDA's stipulation of earning a Gold LEED rating.

Because of Near North's green classification, they'll also receive an additional \$250,000 from a community development block grant through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

"This grant will help create a new generation of housing that will offer residents more than just an affordable home," HUD's Assistant Secretary, Mercedes Marquez said when she announced the award last April. "Working with our partners at the local level, our goal is to produce more, smarter and certainly greener affordable housing for future generations of families."

Alongside site development LEED credits, Near North will receive just under \$1.4 million in Brownfield and Energy Tax Credits for removing soil contamination at the site. According to a study by an area

engineering firm, the building site contains unacceptably high levels of heavy metals and other materials that pose risks for drinking water contamination. The Brownfield credits are also being leveraged as another source of Near North's complex funding.

The Near North partnership acknowledges that building this project will be expensive. At \$15 million, per unit costs are obviously high, somewhere between \$200,000 and \$270,000 depending on how it's measured. To many, spending these sums on a one-bedroom apartment could seem impractical.

The question then becomes, can we measure the value of the community's diversity in dollars and cents? How much richer are our lives because of exposure to as wide a perspective as possible? With all the complications and arguments over the actual costs of building Near North, measuring the value of its benefit is an entirely different, monumentally more difficult debate. Bill Godfrey is deeply philosophical about this point.

"If we capitulate to gentrification," Godfrey said, "then we give in to the idea that our inner cities are going to be affluent enclaves for people with means. Otherwise, we should fight the fight and make sure we can still keep a foothold for low income residents in downtown Ann Arbor."